

ADOPTION RECRUITMENT PLAN

The Children's Division recruitment plan has two components: a group of core activities for which Central Office and every county office will be responsible, and a group of optional activities from which offices may select. Through these activities the Children's Division desires to reach all potential families regardless of their cultural and socioeconomic status. Recruitment efforts must be carried out in all areas of the state to meet the needs of all of Missouri's children that are waiting to be adopted.

The creative ideas stemming from the strategic plan have been implemented statewide. Recruitment services are also provided statewide through contracts with private agencies.

Core Activities

The core activities of the recruitment plan include:

- Central Office and local offices distribute informational packets that describe the foster care and adoption process for prospective applicants.
- Subsidy brochure that discusses financial and support services available.
- Educational and orientation meetings about foster care and adoption will be held at county offices or other community facilities on a regular basis at easily accessible places and times for families. The content of the meetings will include:
 - Descriptions of children in care, including composite pictures of children and profiles of individual children needing care in foster and/or adoptive families;
 - Explanation of the foster care and/or adoption process; and
 - Provision of information about the supportive services available through the CD and the community.
- Completion of family assessments within 90 days of the foster/adoptive family applicant beginning the pre-service training and complete an adoption assessment within 30 days of the adoptive parent applicant's completion of the Spaulding Adoption Training.
- Regular use of media for children in foster care and those waiting for adoption including:
 - Child specific features on television;
 - Features about specific children or categories of children through print media such as local newspapers, organizational newsletters; and
 - Features aired through local radio stations wherein the foster care and adoption programs are discussed and described. Each interview would focus on a category of children with occasional features of specific children waiting for adoption or in need of foster care.
- Use of the CD resource contract for Foster/Adopt is for recruitment, training and assessment with private agencies. These contracts permit

- the CD to reach a wider audience than that which would only be possible through its own staff and resources. In addition to these contracts, the CD collaborates with private adoption agencies to further benefit children waiting for adoption.
- “Home for the Holidays”, a holiday television special on adoption, sponsored by the Dave Thomas Foundation. Missouri’s Foster/Adopt Line was displayed throughout the televised special by CBS affiliates so that persons interested in becoming resource families could call to ask questions or have an adoption information packet sent to them. Approximately 40 interested families called for information during the television special. In the years 2001 and 2002, Missouri received the highest number of inquiries out of all participating states.
 - Use and maintenance of the Internet web pages. Currently, Missouri has one web site and we also work with two national sites on which our children are placed. They include:

-**Photo listing** (<http://www.dssmo.gov/cd/adopt>). This web site lists profiles and a picture of approximately 200 of Missouri’s waiting children. There is a link from this web site into the <http://www.adoptuskids.org> site. The AdoptUSKids and National Adoption Exchange (www.adoptex.org) are national web sites where Missouri’s waiting children are featured.

-**“AdoptUSKids”** (<http://www.adoptuskids.org>) is available to the public and private sector allowing prospective adoptive families across the nation to search for children. Approximately 400 of Missouri’s waiting children are represented on this site. Generic information regarding the adoption process is also covered on this site. Families with a completed adoptive home study may be able to receive more detailed information about children in which they are interested. Professionals have a higher level of clearance in which they can update children’s profiles and match children with families who are also registered on the site.

- Maintenance and monitoring of mandatory registration of all waiting children with all adoption exchanges of which the CD is a member. Currently, this includes the Adoption Exchange.
- Continuance of adoption parties and fairs for children in need of adoptive families in all seven areas that celebrates children and introduces them to families who have expressed interest in adoption. For families, this experience exposes them to very real human needs and reduces the bureaucratic flavor of a public agency’s efforts.
- Maintenance of the Ft. Leonard Wood special adoption projects focused on recruiting military families.
- A set of activities regularly carried out in National Foster Care Month (May) and National Adoption Month (November) including:

The Governor of Missouri signing a proclamation yearly announcing May as the National Foster Care Month and November as National Adoption Month. Foster and adoptive parents are invited to witness the signing of the proclamation.

The wearing of white ribbons by anyone interested in adoption; and displays at fairs, festivals, etc.

- Family Connections Newsletter printed quarterly which addresses the needs of adoptive parents.
- Adoption Awareness Buttons distributed to human service professionals to increase awareness of children awaiting adoption.
- Second Level Matching Team that meets every two months to match waiting families with waiting children within and outside of the State of Missouri.
- Partnering with The Adoption Exchange as a result of the “Making the Family Connection” and the “Missouri Adoption Continuum” projects to provide:
 - Resource libraries in each of the seven geographic areas.
 - Mentoring project in St. Louis that connects new adoptive families with experienced adoptive parents.
 - AdoptCare Network training completed statewide. This training provides therapist specific training on adoption issues.
 - A statewide inquiry response program network of foster and adoptive families to serve as referrals to the programs for which our inquiring family’s call about.
 - Develop a statewide respite network in order to assist with the respite needs of adoptive families.
- Collaboration with the One Church, One Child Program to provide:
 - Ongoing and specific recruitment of churches into the One Church, One Child Program
 - One Church, One Child adoption carnivals and profile parties features all waiting children with an emphasis on African-American children in need of permanent adoptive homes.